

HOMELAND SECURITY®

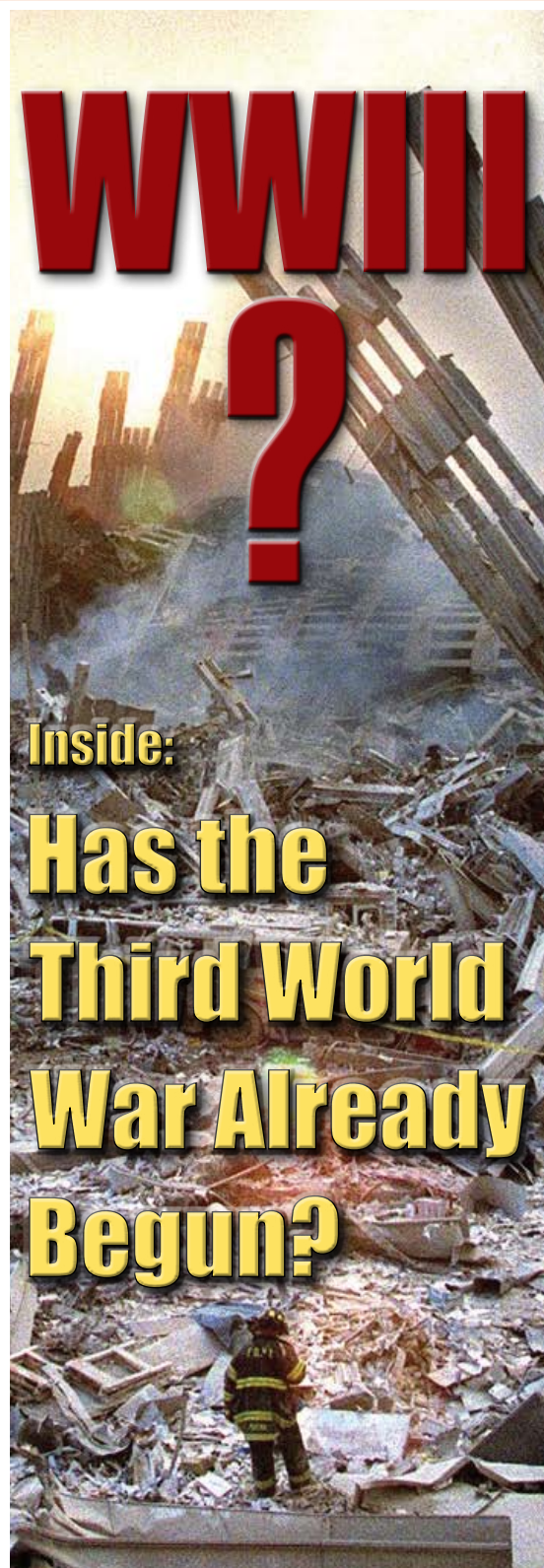
★★ SUMMER 2008 ★★



WWI



WWII

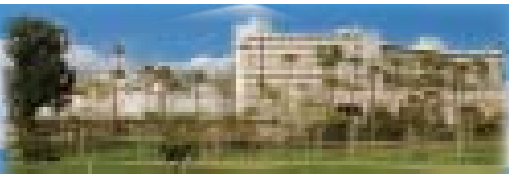


WWIII

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Inside:

Has the Third World War Already Begun?



2008

Conference Preview



New Member

An Interview With Adam Montella, CHS-I

By Anna Pry
IHS Assistant Editor

Please describe your background, experience, and involvement in the homeland security arena.

I am an emergency management and homeland security professional with more than 23 years of direct experience in government and private industry. Following the events of September 11, 2001, I became the first General Manager of Emergency Management for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, helping to rebuild the agency that owned and operated the World Trade Center. I have designed and conducted more than 400 courses, seminars, and exercises that have assisted local, state, and federal government agencies and private industry in their efforts to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters of all types.

I served on the State of Florida Rapid Impact Assessment Team (RIAT) and have served on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) Emergency Response Team (ERT) and the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) at FEMA headquarters.

I am considered one of the country's top disaster planners. My efforts in this area have earned the prestigious Innovations in American Government Award from Harvard University.

Why is homeland security important during this time?

Homeland security is important on many fronts. It is critical to have all-hazard plans in place to deal with natural and manmade disasters, and fighting terrorism takes an unprecedented level of cooperation, coordination, and accountability.

In my opinion, current initiatives and activities successfully preventing or delaying further attacks on the United States is the willingness of our nation's stakeholders to share information and have more open communications, and it is the fact that the nation is better prepared through planning, training, and exercises than at any other time in our history. It is also important to note that the efforts associated with

homeland security are having positive effects on the readiness for all types of disasters.

Do you believe America is in danger of another attack on home soil?

Unfortunately, I do. While a great deal is being done to prevent additional attacks on American soil, plots are thwarted on a regular basis. For example, the current airline restrictions on liquids, gels, and aerosols were put in place in 2006 after the failed bombing attempts at Heathrow airport in London, England.

I believe that it is just a matter of time before a planned attack is successful. Terrorist tactics abroad are becoming far less organized, which actually poses a problem for U.S. intelligence agencies. We are seeing more lone-wolf style attacks with suicide bombers. It is for this reason that shared intelligence is so critical. Local task forces have paved the way for law enforcement and non-law enforcement agencies to rapidly share information and be better prepared.

Are there areas that need improvement?

Yes, I think there are areas that still need improvement. Although there have been many strides in homeland security, and specifically within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, I think there are still areas that need improvement. Standing up the Department of Homeland Security has been likened to the creation of another federal agency. The creation of this agency was spurred by American unpreparedness at the time one of our enemies was creating a tactical advantage over the United States. The year was 1957, the enemy was the Soviet Union, and the agency was NASA. I believe that the idea behind the Department of Homeland Security is sound, and in time, the agency will mature and run like a well-oiled machine.

Another problem is communications and coordination from the department and between local jurisdictions. Even different agencies within jurisdictions have completely different equipment, communications, and technology systems that hamper coordination at the local level. As I mentioned above, there will be more improvement in

this area as standardization is embraced.

Next, more needs to be done to tie preparedness and planning in with response and recovery. History has shown that response and recovery activities that are grounded in a solid plan have a better chance of being successful. Some of the most catastrophic disasters that this country has seen have occurred in the last decade. Imagine how much worse September 11 and Hurricane Katrina would have been without the benefit of a pre-plan for these events.

Are there areas that need to be handled differently?

In my opinion, we, as a nation must make personal and family preparedness a priority. Somewhere along the way, America forgot how to be prepared; we became complacent; we became apathetic. It was not that many years ago during the Cold War that Civil Defense was part of the national consciousness. Every school child knew how to duck and cover; every adult knew where the community fallout shelter was. Although it is human nature to forget about the last disaster the more time passes, what our enemy in the war on terror has that we do not is patience.

Attempts to breach our defenses are made by extremist groups (foreign and domestic) all the time. When they find our soft spot, rest assured, they will exploit it. We must be prepared at the individual level to mitigate our losses. Government alone can't do it. There must be a partnership to preserve our way of life and our homeland's security.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

As cliché as this may sound, I got into homeland security to make the world a little safer for my children. As they keep reminding me by quoting Edna Mode from the Disney movie *The Incredibles*, "Luck favors the prepared."

